



We, Lineage's Director of Programs and Executive Director, write to you with tender-heartedness and resolve as 2020 draws to a close and 2021 draws closer.

We started writing this letter to you—Lineage's community—over the summer, in the throes of our grief and outrage over the murder of George Floyd. As Covid-19 wreaked havoc across the United States, due in large part to the toxic strains of systemic racism and entrenched inequalities that cause unquantifiable harms to Black, Indigineous, Latinx, and other people of color. And as collective grief and calls for justice for George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Elijah McClain and countless others reverberated across New York City, and across the country.

We started writing this letter feeling strongly that we did not want to issue a statement to check some box. We knew that processing everything that was happening—personally and together—was not to be rushed; that it required and deserved our time.

Besides, by the time we started writing this letter, Lineage was already late. Years late.

Lineage is over twenty years old. Over time, teachers, staff, board members, and participants in our events and trainings have called attention to the organization's growing edges, and racialized harms that required repair. These essential conversations informed the evolution of our mission statement, teaching approach, staff professional development, and curriculum.

Yet, to date, Lineage has not developed the language, framework or tools to center antiracism in the ways we feel are critical if Lineage is to realize its fullest potential.

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In Lineage classes, we offer mindfulness practices to young people as a way to validate and make space for their experiences. We do not practice or teach mindfulness to erase or bypass traumas and challenges. We teach mindfulness to honor the constant interplay between what's happening inside of our students, their day-to-day realities inside of the systems where we work, and society at large. Mindfulness for real life.

The two of us draw on this kind of mindfulness practice to help us hold our personal experiences with honesty and compassion as we engage in highly-charged, ongoing conversations about racism and antiracism; our respective positionality as a Black woman and a white woman inside America's white supremacy culture; and the critical work ahead of us, ahead of Lineage, and the non-profit sector.

Our personal mindfulness practices help us reckon with the interconnection between what is happening in the world and what is happening inside of us. They help us identify and be with our reactivity, fear, anger, and pain. And they help us make more skillful decisions about how to tend to ourselves and relate to each other with care and integrity, even when experiencing acute discomfort. Being mindful in this way—aware and responsive to our inner landscapes and the world outside ourselves—anchors us as we keep going deeper into what we know is the most important work either of us will do as part of this organization.

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Mindfulness and antiracism are both predicated on taking stock and being honest about what is. Like mindfulness, antiracism is a practice, a way of being in the world, a way of relating to our internal worlds and of being in relationship with the people around us. Like mindfulness, antiracism is a continuous series of active choices, moment by moment: Neither is never "done."

As a non-profit with embodied practices at the heart of our work, Lineage has a particular kind of accountability to keep going deeper into the work of antiracism because the dynamics of racism

and white supremacy culture are carried inside the body. Lineage is further accountable because we work predominantly with Black and Brown young people inside of racist systems.

In order for Lineage to act in the world with skill and integrity, the people who make up Lineage are accountable for naming and dismantling the dynamics of white supremacy culture embedded in its organizational body.

This collective, organization-wide reckoning is long overdue.

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To this end, we at Lineage are looking inward and asking ourselves and each other where and how white supremacy culture shows up in our organization, and how we will collectively divest from it.

In 2021, Lineage as an organization—teachers, administrators, and board of directors—has committed to a comprehensive process focused on deepening our embodiment of antiracism and anti-oppression. Lineage will financially resource this work in a substantial and ongoing way, including bringing in outside experts to help us.

The work that lies ahead is not work the two of us can do alone: It must be collective, and it must be organization-wide. At the same time, we recognize that each of us is uniquely accountable because we hold structural and financial power in how Lineage operates. As the Director of Programs and the Executive Director, we have particular collaborative work to do. And we recognize that there is unequal power inside our partnership and many differences in our perspectives and life experiences.

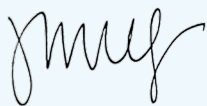
We also know and name that Lineage, like countless other non-profits working with mostly Black and Brown young people, has a white person in the position of greatest institutional authority. And, as in countless other non-profits, people of color doing vital organizational work have often labored with less recognition.

We know there is a lot of complex and high-stakes work ahead of Lineage. As we move forward in this work, we will continue to share with you about our process, what we are doing, and what we learn.

In closing, we want to share some of the resources the two of us have found supportive for our learning and as we work to show up for what is arising inside and around us in the fullest, most whole-hearted way we can.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this message, and for being a part of Lineage's community.

With deep gratitude,



**Jessica Mingus**  
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS



**Gabrielle Prisco**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

#### Resources that have supported Jessica

*My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies* by Resmaa Menakem

Finding Our Way podcast hosted by Prentis Hemphill

*Love and Anger: The Path of Liberation through Anger* by Lama Rod Owens

Somatic abolitionism triad + Communal Consultation for Black Bodies, two peer practice groups

#### Resources that have supported Gabrielle

*White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* by Peggy McIntosh

*This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa

*Race, Racism, and American Law* by Derrick A. Bell

White accountability peer group with other white people working to dismantle white supremacy